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Finance Committee Minutes 02-18-04

ARLINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE
 MINUTES OF MEETING
 7:30 PM O'NEILL ROOM, COMMUNITY SAFETY BUILDING
 2/18/04

ATTENDEES:

| | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| McGaffigan* | | O'Riordan* | O'Neill | Mahoney |
| DeCoursey | Connors* | Simmons | Morrisette | |
| Tosti* | Foskett* | Deyst* | Ronan* | |
| Piandes | Franclemont* | Jones* | Olsen* | |
| DuBois* | Howard* | Fanning* | | Kneeland* |

* Indicates present

VISITORS: Paul Bayer, Vision 2020 CoChair Jane Howard, Vision 2020 Spy Pond Task Group Members Elizabeth Karpati, Steve Ricci, Bill Eykamp

MINUTES of 2/11/04 accepted as corrected. Unanimous.

PEIRCE FIELD: Members received copies of the wording of the proposed amendment to the agreement for review.

WARRANT: A 4th draft was received. The Chair has request reorganization to group like articles as has been done successfully in recent years. Numbering still not final. The committee went through the warrant and selected articles for hearing. Kneeland will arrange hearings.

ART 58 WEED TREATMENT: Vision 2020 requested \$15k to reduce weed growth in Spy Pond. Several years ago the pond was choked with several non native water plants. They stated that the \$37k spent about 3 yrs ago had nearly eliminated the weeds as expected. But the treatment is not permanent. To control weed growth, a maintenance treatment about every 3 yrs is recommended because it has worked well in other ponds around the country. The group requested funds last year. An appropriation was recommended by the FinCom contingent on the override passing. Fortunately treatment was not needed last year. The group discussed other efforts to maintain the pond. Two years ago the group helped the Town secure a \$299k grant. These funds have been used to build leaching catch basins and will be used to treat the pond w/ alum to reduce algae. Plants and algae flourish when phosphates wash into the pond from the watershed. The group has distributed flyers to all homes in the watershed urging use of low phosphate lawn fertilizers. The group has recently helped Arlington & Belmont secure a grant to build catch basins along Rt 2 that will reduce the sediment that washes into the pond from the road. Research by graduate students from Tufts has been used to guide these treatments.

The FinCom decided to table this request until the end of the budget review process.

ART 28 CONTROL OF PARKS: Olsen stated that Police will not enforce field closings called by the Park & Recreation Commission giving as a reason lack of an explicit bylaw. This article would close this loop hole and would help protect the large investment that the Town has made and is planning in field renovation. The BOS is expected to recommend this change. VOTED to support the BOS. Unanimous.

BUD 1 FINCOM: The General Govt SubCom (Howard) recommended the level-funded budget as printed unless additional funds become available. VOTED \$9995. Unanimous.

BUD9 LEGAL: The General SubCom recommended the budget as printed. This would return the Workman Compensation budget to \$331k as in FY03 & earlier years. The department expects to spend about this much in FY04 despite the \$231k budget. The SubCom described a demo it received of the departments new computerized data base for legal records and WC records. VOTED \$705026. Unanimous.

BUD 13 PLANNING: The General Govt SubCom recommended a reduction in expenses since the introduction of the new line item, clothing allowance, had previously been included in another line item but most of these were not reduced. The one exception is the travel allowance which was reduced because the new director receives less than the former director.

Also the SubCom recommended that a portion of the Administrative Aid's longevity as well as her salary be paid by the Central School. VOTED \$166919. Unanimous.

BUD 14 REDEVELOPMENT: The General Govt SubCom recommended a reduction in expenses for the same reason as in BUD 13. An update of the department's recap and forecast of income and expenses for the rentals it handles is not available. The director is very busy with Symmes & Reeds Brook. His former position has not been filled. He will update this document and furnish a copy to the FinCom. VOTED \$391895. Unanimous.

BUD 15 ZBA: The General Govt SubCom recommended various changes because of errors. A discussion ensued about the clothing allowance. Some members felt this was concealed from Town Meeting when the contract w/ Local 680 was approved 2 yrs ago. Others questioned whether the clothing & cleaning allowances appearing in different places were in fact the same thing. Franclemont will ask the Town Manager for clarification. Action on this budget was postponed for lack of time.

COMMITTEE: A combined Fincom/BOS report to STM to printed tomorrow. Next mtg 2/23/04 will focus on budgets. Also mtg in Hearing Room at 7:30 2/25 before the Special Town Meeting.

For more info go to <http://www.arlingtonfincom.com/>

RESERVE FUND BALANCE \$388,000

cc Selectmen, FinCom Members , Library file, Town Manager, Town Web Site

Peter B Howard, Secretary, 2/20/04